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## **Request to improve Public Act 06-115 Bullying Policies In Connecticut Schools**

March 10, 2008

We have been informed by Joshua Wojcik from Senator Handley's office that Connecticut Senate Bill 649 is being reviewed by this committee for modifications and funding requests. It "examines health literacy within Connecticut hospitals - including the Children's Hospitals". Joshua Wojcik has invited us to speak before you to present our case which is related to the health and safety of school children - our children.

In the next three minutes, we will describe the injuries, monetary costs and inconveniences we have recently experienced. We will also point out what we perceive as significant flaws in a somewhat related but different existing law - Public Act 06-115 on bullying policies in Connecticut Schools. As tax paying, voting citizens of Connecticut, we request that Public Act 06-115 be fixed.

We present recommendations to accompany our request to the Connecticut General Assembly to substantially improve this law. This law does not uniformly require any specific response to prevent the bullying conduct. The required response of any educational administration is not specified. This is where the law is flawed, silent and disintegrates. We understand that local authorities want to have control over how they prescribe disciplinary action. However, this silence is unacceptable! Strict minimum statewide standards must be set. The original Statute 10-222D was created after a Connecticut student committed suicide because of bullying. The Journal Inquirer - Friday March 7, 2008 - page 17, has a full review of the case. Is it necessary for another tragedy to occur before this current statute PA 06-115 is fixed?

There is a problem with defining bullying only as an act or acts **committed more than once** - requiring "more than one occurrence". Bullying should also be defined by the actual act committed, especially when a weapon is used or the act of bullying causes serious injury to the victim. A weapon should be defined as any object used by an individual against another individual to psychologically or physically threaten the intended victim or cause actual physical or psychological damage to the victim - even if it is only the **FIRST** occurrence. We consider the use of a "sharp push pin" as the weapon in our case. A weapon should not have to be a gun or knife.

We are the loving and caring parents of an eight year old boy Gary, who is attending second grade at Breakthrough Magnet School in Hartford, CT. Gary was a 7 year old victim of bullying resulting in sexual and physical assault and battery on a school bus. We have photographs as proof of the injuries. He has lost his childhood as a result of the recent bullying events in his life. He will need psychological counseling.

As parents, we have had to provide for our children's safe transportation when the bully was allowed to ride on the bus. We took turns to drive our kids to school instead of putting them on the bus and incurred significant expenses and inconveniences to do so. We strongly feel that the victim has been punished and the bully has been rewarded.

We have tried to work very closely with many local officials in the Hartford and Manchester education systems. In our opinion, the initial responses of the Hartford school system have been poor and lacking at best. We have been told that there are no Connecticut statutes that protect Gary or if there are statutes, these statutes "HAVE NO TEETH" because there is no funding to support those statutes. We were told to contact our legislators to get new laws written or strengthen the existing statutes.

The overall goal of any legislation should be the ELIMINATION of the bullying behavior as soon as possible. Basically a ONE STRIKE AND YOU ARE OUT mandate. Without this "strength - or TEETH" to the law, ANY student is at serious risk of serious injury. For the state of Connecticut to have a "wait and see until it happens" mandate regarding the safety of our school children is - quite frankly - an abomination - in my opinion - legally approved negligence! A "ONE STRIKE AND YOU ARE OUT" statute does not have to cost the state of Connecticut or any city, town or locality, any additional funds other than what is already being spent. If an individual student is found guilty of bullying or committing a single bullying act, that child should be suspended for a given period of time and any costs incurred should be the responsibility of the student's parents or legal guardians. A second occurrence should be grounds for immediate permanent expulsion. If there is opposition to this perspective ( of putting TEETH into the current Connecticut statute) by local authorities, they should still be held legally responsible and accountable for putting an IMMEDIATE end to the bullying. Other alternatives would most likely cost the town, city, locality or state of Connecticut more money. This is where funding and budgets is an issue!

Our experiences in working with public educational authorities have been grueling at best. Our perception is that they have intentionally tried to refrain from properly documenting the bullying incidents, have tried to minimize the incidents or have tried to falsely blame the victim for provoking the bullying. They obviously have to be concerned with financing - budgeting - the bottom line. There is intense competition for funding requests, not only for the education of our children but also for the whole state budget in general. We understand this! The question we need to ask is - what is the value of the lives and safety of our school children? **In our opinion, the value is PRICELESS!** During a meeting in the middle of February, Principal Norma Neumann-Johnson of Breakthrough Magnet School looked at the photographs of our son Gary with the original scratches on his face placed there by the bully. She angrily said she was not responsible for it. Principal Johnson also said that Breakthrough Magnet School is a school of choice. If we do not like it there or are not happy there, then why don't we just leave? We have a tape recording of her saying this. I am not sure if she is legally correct or not. In any case, this is a clear message to us as parents that the Hartford Board Of Education is not willing to guarantee us the safe transportation of our children to and from Breakthrough Magnet School. However, they want the money that our children represent. If we were to leave Breakthrough Magnet School, then another suburban family would simply take our place and be susceptible to the same treatment we received.

We have some questions for our Connecticut legislators please. Is this the message that Mayor Perez wants to promote as part of his marketing plan to the suburban communities around Hartford? Should this message be promoted through out Connecticut? We fear that if something substantial is not done to improve the current laws in Connecticut, this will happen again to many other Connecticut families in the future. Had the laws been properly defined, the chances of Gary's assault would have been greatly reduced, if not eliminated. For your information, we are also aware of the pellet gun incident that occurred on the morning of January 25, 2008 in Bloomfield on a school bus where a student was struck twice and injured. The school bus transports students of inter-district magnet high schools: "The Metropolitan Learning Center" and "The Big Picture High School". When is this going to stop?

In addition to requesting the funding from the State Budget, we have some fund raising suggestions. Operation Fuel has been extremely successful in Connecticut. Perhaps a similar organization can be set up to raise funds to protect school children on buses by providing funds to pay for monitors. Perhaps an additional "choice" can be put on the bottom of Connecticut State Income Tax returns to allow for voluntary donations from tax payers.. Perhaps volunteers can serve as monitors on buses. The state of Rhode Island has a statue requiring monitors on school buses for elementary schools which is worth considering. 2008 -- S 2268 Section 16-21-1(b). We have other ideas.

We received the help of Brad Davis from WDRC in Bloomfield, CT. We heard on his Morning Radio Talk Show that Mayor Perez told Brad that a monitor would be provided on our children's school bus through the end of this school year. This was welcome news. Unfortunately we had to present our case publicly in order to get school authorities to correct a dangerous mistake and put a monitor back on the bus that had originally been removed for financial/budget reasons.

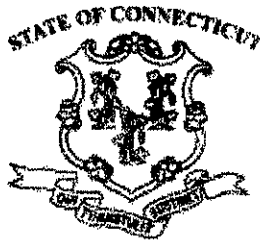
We are passing out these notebooks filled with pertinent information that we hope you will take the time to review. As you can see, we have invested considerable time and money in presenting this request to you.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,  
Harold (Hal) Nelson  
Carol Nelson  
71 Yale Drive  
Manchester, CT. 06042

(860)645-8331 (Home)  
(860)402-5650 (Carol - Cell)  
(203) 752-4131 (Hal - Work)

HalNelson@Compuserve.com



**Substitute House Bill No. 5563**

**Public Act No. 06-115**

**AN ACT CONCERNING BULLYING POLICIES IN SCHOOLS AND NOTICES SENT TO PARENTS OR LEGAL GUARDIANS.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. Section 10-222d of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2006*):

Each local and regional board of education shall develop a policy, for use on and after February 1, 2003, to address the existence of bullying in its schools. Such policy shall: (1) Enable students to anonymously report acts of bullying to teachers and school administrators and require students to be notified annually of the process by which they may make such reports, (2) enable the parents or guardians of students to file written reports of suspected bullying, (3) require teachers and other school staff who witness acts of bullying or receive student reports of bullying to notify school administrators, (4) require school administrators to investigate any written reports filed pursuant to subdivision (2) of this section and to review any anonymous reports, (5) include an intervention strategy for school staff to deal with bullying, (6) provide for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying, (7) require the parents or guardians of students who commit any verified acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of students against whom such acts were directed to be notified, [and] (8) require each school to maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in such school and make such list available for public inspection, and (9) direct the development of case-by-case interventions for addressing repeated incidents of bullying against a single individual or recurrently perpetrated bullying incidents by the same individual that may include both counseling and discipline. The notification required pursuant to subdivision (7) of this section shall include a description of the response of school staff to such acts and any consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying. For purposes of this section, "bullying" means any overt acts by a student or a group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds, [or] at a school-sponsored activity or on a school bus, which acts are repeated against the same student over time. Such policies may include provisions addressing bullying outside of the school setting if it has a direct and negative impact on a student's academic performance or safety in school.

Sec. 2. Section 10-15b of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2006*):

(a) Either parent or legal guardian of a minor student shall, upon written request to a local or regional board of education and within a reasonable time, be entitled to knowledge of and access to all educational, medical, or similar records maintained in such student's cumulative record, except that no parent or legal guardian shall be entitled to information considered privileged under section 10-154a.

(b) The parent or legal guardian with whom the student does not primarily reside shall be provided with all school notices that are provided to the parent or legal guardian with whom the student primarily resides. Such notices shall be mailed to the parent or legal guardian requesting them at the same time they are provided to the parent or legal guardian with whom the child primarily resides. Such requests shall be effective for as long as the child remains in the school the child is attending at the time of the request.

[(b)] (c) If any private or public school is served with a subpoena issued by competent authority directing the production of school or student records in connection with any proceedings in any court, the school upon which such subpoena is served may deliver such record or at its option a copy thereof to the clerk of such court. Such clerk shall give a receipt for the same, shall be responsible for the safekeeping thereof, shall not permit the same to be removed from the premises of the court and shall notify the school to call for the same when it is no longer needed for use in court. Any such record or copy so delivered to such clerk shall be sealed in an envelope which shall indicate the name of the school or student, the name of the attorney subpoenaing the same and the title of the case referred to in the subpoena. No such record or copy shall be open to inspection by any person except upon the order of a judge of the court concerned, and any such record or copy shall at all times be subject to the order of such judge. Any and all parts of any such record or copy, if not otherwise inadmissible, shall be admitted in evidence without any preliminary testimony, if there is attached thereto the certification in affidavit form of the person in charge of such records indicating that such record or copy is the original record or a copy thereof, made in the regular course of the business of the school, and that it was the regular course of such business to make such record at the time of the transactions, occurrences or events recorded therein or within a reasonable time thereafter. A subpoena directing production of such school or student records shall be served not less than eighteen hours before the time for production, provided such subpoena shall be valid if served less than eighteen hours before the time of production if written notice of intent to serve such subpoena has been delivered to the person in charge of such records not less than eighteen hours nor more than two weeks before such time for production.

Approved June 2, 2006

10-222D

## Connecticut Foundation for Environmentally Safe Schools

### An Act Concerning Bullying Behavior in Schools and Concerning the Pledge of Allegiance

*Substitute House Bill No. 5425**Public Act No. 02-119*

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2002*) Each local and regional board of education shall develop a policy, for use on and after February 1, 2003, to address the existence of bullying in its schools. Such policy shall: (1) Enable students to anonymously report acts of bullying to teachers and school administrators, (2) enable the parents or guardians of students to file written reports of suspected bullying, (3) require teachers and other school staff who witness acts of bullying or receive student reports of bullying to notify school administrators, (4) require school administrators to investigate any written reports filed pursuant to subdivision (2) of this section and to review any anonymous reports, (5) include an intervention strategy for school staff to deal with bullying, (6) provide for the inclusion of language in student codes of conduct concerning bullying, (7) require the parents or guardians of students who commit any verified acts of bullying and the parents or guardians of students against whom such acts were directed to be notified, and (8) require each school to maintain a list of the number of verified acts of bullying in such school and make such list available for public inspection. The notification required pursuant to subdivision (7) of this section shall include a description of the response of school staff to such acts and any consequences that may result from the commission of further acts of bullying. For purposes of this section, "bullying" means any overt acts by a student or a group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds or at a school-sponsored activity which acts are repeated against the same student over time.

Sec. 2. Section 10-230 of the general statutes is amended by adding subsection (c) as follows (*Effective October 1, 2002*):

(NEW) (c) Each local and regional board of education shall develop a policy to ensure that time is available each school day for students in the schools under its jurisdiction to recite the "Pledge of Allegiance". The provisions of this subsection shall not be construed to require any person to recite the "Pledge of Allegiance".

*Approved June 7, 2002 Connecticut General Assembly*

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2008

AN ACT

RELATING TO EDUCATION - HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS

Introduced By: Senators Walaska, Bates, and Cote

Date Introduced: February 07, 2008

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1       SECTION 1. Section 16-21-1 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-21 entitled "Health and  
2       Safety of Pupils" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3       16-21-1. Transportation of public and private school pupils. -- (a) The school  
4       committee of any town or city shall provide suitable transportation to and from school for pupils  
5       attending public and private schools of elementary and high school grades, except private schools  
6       that are operated for profit, who reside so far from the public or private school which the pupil  
7       attends as to make the pupil's regular attendance at school impractical and for any pupil whose  
8       regular attendance would otherwise be impracticable on account of physical disability or  
9       infirmity.

★ (10) → (b) For transportation provided to children enrolled in grades kindergarten through five  
11       (5), school bus monitors, other than the school bus driver, shall be required on all school bound  
12       and home bound routes. Variances to the requirement for a school bus monitor may be granted by  
13       the commissioner of elementary and secondary education if he or she finds that an alternative  
14       plan provides substantially equivalent safety for children.

15       (c) In any and all circumstances, school bus monitors for secondary and middle school  
16       pupils are optional for each school district. The school district shall file its intention with the  
17       commission for secondary and elementary education by August 1<sup>st</sup> of each year as to whether it  
18       will or will not be providing school bus monitors for the succeeding school year.

19       (d) For the purposes of this section a "school bus monitor" means any person sixteen (16)



1 years of age or older.

2 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

LC00893

EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T  
RELATING TO EDUCATION - HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS

\*\*\*

1 This act would restrict the mandatory providing of school bus monitors to grades  
2 kindergarten through five (5), and would provide for an explicit elimination for the provision of  
3 school bus monitors for secondary and middle school pupils.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

LC00893

02/10/2008

To all parties concerned:

Gary has been a 7 year old victim of bullying resulting in physical assault and battery. We have photographs of the injuries to his face. He was also forced to repeatedly kiss the exposed naked bottom of the bully. In another later incident, Gary was physically threatened by the same person with a sharp push pin.

These incidents have been fully recorded through testimony by Gary himself. It has been officially reported to the Department of Children and Families, the Hartford Board of Education, several Connecticut government officials and the Hartford Police Department. We have requested that these documents be added to Gary's student file.

During an emergency PPT meeting on 2/6/2008, the Principal stated that Gary has not experienced any trauma as a result of these incidents. The Principal did not even recall that Gary had any physical injuries to his face. We consider this blatant disregard of events as harassment and negligence. It constitutes "Deliberate Indifference" and violates Tort law with regard to negligence. It is not a reasonable effort for resolution. CC's bullying behavior is fully known to the staff at Breakthrough Magnet School. She has a recorded history of it towards many students since she entered Breakthrough in September 2006.

A school board's control over its students regarding transportation extends from when a school bus picks up a student at a bus stop to the school door. Under common law, a school district's duty of care ends when a student has been discharged at a safe bus stop. The sexual assault and harassment incidents described above took place on a school bus during transportation to and from summer school during the summer of 2007 or later in the new school academic year. Mr. Till (a Logisticare Supervisor) provided a monitor as a preventative measure to stop the bullying behavior. It worked. When the bus contract was changed as of January 2008, Mr. Jose Rivera (Transportation Coordinator - Hartford Board of Education) decided not to continue the use of a monitor. Thereafter, within approximately ten trips during 2008, CC took advantage of the inadequate safety on the bus and threatened Gary with the push pin.

We are currently reviewing Connecticut Statutes - including Public Act No 06-115 that replaces Section 10-222d. This also relates to House Bill No. 5563. We are also reviewing Federal statutes and court decisions (cases) from Connecticut, the Supreme Court and other states.

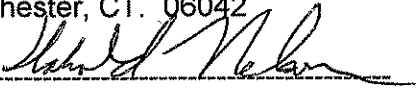
As parents of Gary Nelson, we will do everything in our legal power to protect him and his rights and our daughter Laura Nelson as well. We are willing to be reasonable. However there are minimum standards we must insist on. We have suggested the placement of a monitor on the bus. This has been rejected as too expensive. The placement of a camera on the bus would be helpful. However, it would not actually prevent another physical assault and may not record all events hidden by the high backs of the bus seats. Gary has already been physically attacked or threatened more than once. Changing bus drivers to get a stricter disciplinarian driver is also helpful. However, the bus driver's primary task is to safely drive the bus and KEEP THEIR EYES ON THE ROAD. The bus driver can not physically stop another assault from the driver's seat. Alternative seating arrangements have been tried and ignored by CC. She leaves her assigned seat and sits next to Gary. If a monitor is not an acceptable alternative, then CC must not be allowed to ride on the same bus as Gary and Laura. The proposed transportation of CC by herself for seven of the ten rides is a step in the right direction but is not acceptable unless a monitor is on the bus for the remaining three rides each week. It would be prudent to have her transported to school alone. We have been told that the town of Manchester would be willing to partially pay for the cost of a monitor.

Laura Nelson and CC are currently taking an after school program involving latch hooking. Laura has informed us that she really likes this class. We have been told that Laura will be taken out of this program. Laura must not be punished by being removed from the class.

Melissa Dumont will be the advocate for Gary's IEP - S.E. issues only. Please respond via Lisa Verderame to Carol Nelson by cell # (860)402-5650 no later than 1:00 PM on Tuesday 2/12/2008. Mr. Till needs to coordinate the camera bus with Miss Hudson (Vernon/Manchester bus driver).

We are giving a copy of this letter to our attorney.

Sincerely,  
Harold and Carol Nelson  
71 Yale Drive  
Manchester, CT. 06042

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Harold Nelson", written over a horizontal dashed line.A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Carol Nelson", written over a horizontal dashed line.

CC: Kristy LaPorte S.E Supervisor, Manchester CT. Board of Education  
CC: Dr. Steven Adomowski Superintendent Hartford Board of Education  
CC: Thomas Karpeichick Support Service Human Resources Dept Hartford Public Schools  
CC: Lisa Verderame - S.E. Case Manager - Breakthrough Magnet School  
CC: Student File - Gary N. Nelson



Breakthrough Magnet School  
290 Brookfield Street  
Hartford, CT 06106

2/12/08

Dear Mr. and Ms. Nelson,

We have worked closely with the bus company to generate a safe bus ride to and from Breakthrough Magnet School on the Vernon/Manchester bus, and have arrived at the following permanent provisions effective February 19, 2008 until the school year's end:

- Assigned seats for all youngsters on the bus
- A video camera installed with tapes reviewed weekly
- The assignment of one of the drivers, employed by the bus company, known to be effective at creating a more orderly environment amongst the children

Additionally, we are most grateful for, and have accepted the offer of, Mr. and Ms. Caplinger, to provide alternate transportation for their daughter Mondays through Thursdays in the PM, and Mondays through Wednesdays in the AM. She will, therefore, be transported on the school bus Thursdays and Fridays in the AM and Fridays in the PM.

We know that a satisfactory implementation of this plan will require the cooperation, care, and commitment of classroom and school staff, and parents. This information will be shared with Manchester Public Schools, both sets of parents, the Hartford Public Schools and the Breakthrough staff. If you have any further concerns with regard to the above plan, please contact, the Assistant Superintendent for the Hartford Public Schools, Dr. Jackie Jacobie.

Yours truly,

Norma Neumann-Johnson  
(principal)

Cc: J. Jacoby, Ph.D. <sup>Ed</sup> Acting CEO  
Cc: T. Cassile  
Cc: Jose Rivera

02/14/2008

Jacqueline Jacobie, Ed. D  
Assistant Superintendent  
960 Main Street  
Hartford, CT. 06103

Dear Dr. Jacobie:

Our thanks to Principal Newmann-Johnson for the letter and the provisions contained therein. Given the practicality of the situation, we accept the offer and retain our right to other options. We also respectfully request the following:

- The cost of early childcare should be waived for Gary and Laura on Thursdays and Fridays effective starting Thursday 2/21/2008 until the school year ends.
- In the event of an emergency where CC's parents illness or other reasons prevent them from transporting CC to school on Mondays through Wednesdays and Thursday afternoon, other arrangements should be made for CC's transportation that does not include the school bus for those seven rides each week.

We must transport Gary and Laura on Thursdays and Fridays. The placement of a camera on the bus would not actually prevent another physical assault and may not record all events hidden by the high backs of the bus seats. Gary has already been physically attacked or threatened more than once. Changing bus drivers to get a stricter disciplinarian driver is somewhat helpful. However, the bus driver's primary task is to safely drive the bus and **KEEP THEIR EYES ON THE ROAD**. The bus driver can not physically stop another assault from the driver's seat. Alternative seating arrangements have been tried and ignored by CC. She leaves her assigned seat and sits next to Gary.

Gary has been a 7 year old victim of bullying resulting in physical assault and battery. We have photographs of the injuries to his face. He was also forced to repeatedly kiss the exposed naked bottom of the bully. In another later incident, Gary was physically threatened by the same person with a sharp push pin. Gary is not a lab rat in a social experiment. He has lost his childhood as a result of the recent bullying events in his life. He will need psychological counseling. As parents, we must provide for Gary and Laura's safety. Harold Nelson will no longer be able to take the bus to work to New Haven on Thursdays and Fridays. He will have to pay \$10 each day for parking as well as the cost of gas for traveling between Hartford and New Haven. Carol Nelson must be at her job long before 7:30 AM each day. Her supervisor has been very helpful and accommodating for the past month in light of the events that have transpired. However, this accommodation is costly and logistically difficult for her employer and will not continue. We strongly feel that the victim has been punished and the bully has been rewarded.

We are giving a copy of this letter to our attorney along with a copy of the letter from Principal Johnson.

Sincerely,  
Harold and Carol Nelson  
71 Yale Drive  
Manchester, CT. 06042



CC: Kristy LaPorte S.E Supervisor, Manchester CT. Board of Education  
CC: Dr. Steven Adomowski Superintendent Hartford Board of Education  
CC: Thomas Karpeichick Support Service Human Resources Dept Hartford Public Schools  
CC: Lisa Verderame - S.E. Case Manager - Breakthrough Magnet School  
CC: Student File - Gary N. Nelson  
CC: Norma Neumann-Johnson - Principal - Breakthrough Magnet School

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From: **Rep. Barry, Ryan** <Ryan.Barry@cga.ct.gov>  
To: <HalNelson@compuserve.com>  
Subject: **RE:**  
Date: Sun, 17 Feb 2008 20:28:08 -0500  
CC: Smullen, Hal <Hal.Smullen@cga.ct.gov>

Hal: It was nice talking with you this evening. I hope to be able to help. I am particularly disturbed by what you have written to me and will do everything I can to work quickly on this. Please feel free to call me at my home at 643-9180, my cell 214-8911, my law office at 649-4400 or at my capitol office at 240-0412. My legislative aide's name is Hal Smullen. He is great to work with. I'll be getting back to you soon. Sincerely, Ryan

 Hal Smullen

-----Original Message-----

From: 112453@xsmt10.mail2web.com [mailto:112453@xsmt10.mail2web.com]  
On Behalf Of HalNelson@compuserve.com  
Sent: Sunday, February 17, 2008 9:22 AM  
To: Senator Handley; Rep. Barry, Ryan  
Cc: Brad.Davis@talkofconnecticut.com  
Subject:

February 17, 2008

The Honorable Senator Mary Ann Handley The Honorable Congressman  
Ryan  
Barry  
Legislative Office Building Legislative Office Building  
Room 3000 Room 2405  
Hartford, CT. 06106-1591 Hartford, CT. 06106-1591

Dear Honorable Senator Mary Ann Handley and Honorable Congressman Ryan  
Barry;

We are the loving and caring parents of an eight year old boy Gary, who is attending second grade at Breakthrough Magnet School in Hartford, CT. Gary has been a 7 year old victim of bullying resulting in physical assault and battery on a school bus. We have photographs of the injuries to his face.

He was also forced to repeatedly kiss the exposed naked bottom of the bully. In another later incident, Gary was physically threatened by the

same person with a sharp push pin. Gary is not a lab rat in a social experiment. He has lost his childhood as a result of the recent bullying events in his life. He will need psychological counseling.

As parents, we have tried to work very closely with many local officials in the Hartford and Manchester education systems. In our opinion, the response of the Hartford school system has been unacceptable at best. We have been told that there are no Connecticut statutes that protect Gary or if there are statutes, these statutes "HAVE NO TEETH" because there is no funding to support those statutes. We were told to contact our legislators to get new laws written or strengthen the existing statutes.

As tax paying, voting citizens of Connecticut, we would greatly appreciate your interest in at least looking into this matter.

I am attaching many letters of correspondence related to this matter. We would appreciate it if you would take a few minutes to read them. We would also greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you for discussions to improve the laws of Connecticut to protect it's youth in it's school systems. We have faxed these letters to the Brad Davis Radio Talk show. A very lively conversation occurred during the morning hours of Saturday 2/16/2008 regarding Gary's incident as well as bullying in Connecticut schools in general. Our thanks to Brad Davis for the opportunity to discuss this.

We would greatly appreciate hearing from you.

Sincerely,  
Hal Nelson (Hal) Nelson  
Carol Nelson  
71 Yale Drive  
Manchester, CT. 06042

HalNelson@Compuserve.com

CC: Brad Davis TALKOFCONNECTICUT.COM

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Gary Manion  
631 Talcottville Road  
Mystic 9  
Vernon, CT 06066  
gmanion@snet.net

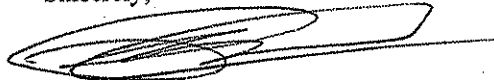
March 8, 2008

**Harold & Carol Nelson**  
71 Yale Drive  
Manchester, CT 06042

Harold & Carol,

I, Gary Manion, give you permission to use the letter I wrote describing the bullying my two sons have had to endure while attending school at Break Through Magnet School in Hartford and the behavior my wife and I have been subject to. You may use my testimony contained in the letter as a second voice to your argument in resolving the bullying issue school. If you have any further need of assistance please feel free to call me anytime. Home - (860) 870-4469, Cell - (860) 550-1548.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Gary Manion", written over a horizontal line.

Gary Manion



Gary Manion  
631 Talcottville Road  
Vernon, CT 06066  
550-1548  
870-4469

Norma Neumann-Johnson  
Breakthrough Magnet School  
290 Brookfield Street  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Mrs. Norma Neumann-Johnson,

2/5/08

This letter is being written to summarize the dangerous situation on the Vernon, Manchester bus run. Both my sons (Alex and Arkady) ride the bus on an almost daily basis. My older son Arkady has been the victim of bullying.

Last spring a student on the bus called my wife several derogatory, profane names by yelling out the window. Mrs. Manion was simply assisting with Alex's backpack as he was unloading. She had never heard these words and was shocked that a boy would use them to hurt her and the other students on the bus who overheard the jeering. This middle school boy still rides the bus.

On the first day of school (07-08) this same student was in a fight with Arkady resulting in facial bruises. I have photographs of the injuries. This boy was suspended from riding the bus for five days as he apparently provoked the fight.

I was encouraged to transport my boys from the school to home. It was a huge inconvenience but I want my son's safe. On those days when I could not transport them my son Arkady reported that he was depressed and begged me to come and get him. It took me weeks to keep him from using his cell phone as he would repeatedly call me begging me to come and get him. Again, he was getting depressed. It is very sad that my child had to go through this experience.

I am very disappointed that the bus monitor has been removed from the bus and would like to see that someone be put back on the bus to keep things quiet.

Respectfully,



Gary Manion

Cc:

Dr. Steven Adomowski - Superintendent Hartford Public Schools  
Mr. Jose Rivera - Director of Transportation  
Mr. Gianni Zarilli - Supervisor of Logisticare

Student File

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February 6, 2008



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## One Injured, Two Arrested In Pellet Gun Incident

Courant Staff Report

2:00 PM EST, January 25, 2008

BLOOMFIELD - Two Metropolitan Learning Center students were arrested and a Big Picture High School student was injured in a pellet gun incident on a school bus this morning.

Officers responding to the altercation learned that the Big Picture student had been struck twice at about 8 a.m. by plastic projectiles from a pellet "type" gun, police said. The victim sustained minor injuries and was taken to St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center for treatment and evaluation, police said.

The two Metropolitan Learning Center students were taken into custody and brought to juvenile court in Hartford, police said. They were charged with risk of injury to a minor, breach of peace and reckless endangerment, police said.

The Metropolitan Learning Center, located at 1551 Blue Hills Avenue, and the Big Picture High School, located at 44 Griffin Road South, are inter-district magnet high schools. Some of the students utilize the same bus for transportation to school, police said.

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3/2/08

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## **Suspended Students Need More Than 'Mini-Vacations' On Streets**

November 22, 2005  
by Helen Ubifias

He'd heard Andrea Comer on the radio the week before, talking about her recent election to the board of education and her plan to review school suspensions, and sent her a letter.

They'd actually met a few years back, when she helped mediate between him and some other kids who were beefing. He's in jail now, which is why she wouldn't give me his name: She wanted his permission first.

But she shared the letter. Keep talking about those suspensions, the young man wrote. Back when he was in school, the 18-year-old said, he used suspensions as vacations. He'd purposely get into trouble just so he could get out of school. His mother never knew because he'd erase the messages the school left on their answering machine and rip up the letters they sent home.

"I did this from Clark all the way to Weaver," he wrote. "Damn, elementary to high school and they never got it."

Looks like folks still haven't caught on.

The word is, the weekend's rash of violence was sparked by the arrest of a 15-year-old who was on suspension from Weaver High School when he boarded a school bus and pointed a gun at a girl.

She complained, and when he tried to board the bus the next day, he was stopped by a police officer. The cop found a BB gun in his possession and arrested him.

A group of the kid's friends confronted the girl, outraged that she would complain about having a gun pointed at her. The tensions from that confrontation are believed to have contributed to the weekend violence.

The 15-year old was on a five-day outside suspension for cutting classes and leaving school grounds without permission on numerous occasions. So, you'd think the last place he'd go was school, right? But first chance he got, that's exactly what he did.

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3/2/08

He's not alone. Spend any time outside Weaver and you'll bump into lots of kids who find their way to the school when they're suspended, looking for friends and trouble. It's not hard to catch a ride: They just hop a school bus.

In the past couple of years, the school district has been trying to reduce both in-school and outside suspensions. Most of the schools now have suspension rooms where students are confined to do homework, and "responsible thinking rooms," where students meet with a specialist about improving behavior. The result is an 11 percent decrease in in-school suspensions, from 14,728 to 13,158 last year, said Hartford's public schools spokesperson Terry D'Italia.

Outside suspensions - handed out in the worst cases - have gone down too, from 10,743 to 9,174 last year, a 15 percent drop.

Sounds good, right? But let's do a little math.

Say 9,000 kids are suspended for 5 days each. That's 45,000 days of suspension, divided by 180 days in the school year. That's an average of 250 kids out on suspension on any given school day.

Two hundred and fifty chances for a kid who shouldn't be, to be on the bus, on the street, starting trouble that sparks even more trouble.

The good news is that there's a good idea out there. Eric Crawford, the district's violence prevention specialist, has been pushing a proposal for an intervention center that makes sense. Instead of a week-long vacation, kids would have to report to a center where they would meet with career coaches, substance and mental health specialists and where parents would be required to attend a parenting class before their children were allowed back in school.

Monday, Hartford Mayor Eddie Perez said he supports the concept.

Well, now it's time to go beyond support.

There are too many kids roaming the streets of Hartford, too many kids with no supervision, no one holding them accountable for their time. Too many kids like the 18-year-old who went from mini-vacations from school to a much longer one in prison.

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